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## Letter to J.A. Baylor from Dr. Brown Ayres

Brown Ayres

*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

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August 30, 1916

Dr. J. A. Baylor,  
732 North Fourth avenue,  
Knoxville, Tennessee

Dear Doctor Baylor:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 23, enclosing a copy of the action of the Ministers' Association of the M.E. Church, South. I am sorry that this paper was not received in time to be submitted with other papers bearing on the case to our Board of Trustees at their meeting in the latter part of July. It seems as if fate was conspiring to prevent these matters reaching us in time. Not only did your stenographer fail to mail the report of the action taken by you, but a letter from Mrs. J. H. Knox, asking for a personal hearing was in some way held up in the post-office so that it was not received by me until a week after it was mailed. I cannot, of course, say what would have been the effect on the committee of the Trustees if these matters had been before them in addition to what was filed, but for your information I wish to say that every opportunity was given to the ladies who originally preferred the charge, to submit anything additional that they wished to submit in writing before the meeting of the Board, and the action of the ministers of the northern church, which was received on the morning of the board meeting, was attached to the papers and submitted to the committee. The action of the committee was accepted by the full Board of Trustees as their action in the premises, so that it would not be competent for me or any sub-committee, or group of officers to revise or modify the action of the Board of Trustees, and as they will not meet again until their next regular annual meeting in July, 1917, I do not know what can be done with the matter further at this time.

Will you allow me, however, to correct some errors under which you are laboring?

In the first place, the charge of Dr. Stough was that some one not named, was "teaching" immorality to his classes. This charge was unsubstantiated and disproved.

The second charge was that Professor Schaeffer had expressed the belief in a double standard of morals in the course of a lecture given to the Anti-Vice League. This charge was denied by Professor Schaeffer and disproved by the preponderance of evidence before the committee. As to the question whether Professor Schaeffer expressed, in a subsequent interview with Mrs. French, or with Mrs.



French and other ladies, a belief in a double standard of morals, we have the distinct statement of Professor Schaeffer that he does not believe in such a double standard, and he is a man of absolutely pure moral life and thoroughly trustworthy and reliable. You are also mistaken in stating that Mrs. French absolutely denies that she wrote the newspaper article. Mrs. French says that she does not remember whether she wrote it or not and I suggested to her that this could perhaps be determined by an investigation at the newspaper office, but she has not yet denied, either publicly or to me that she did not write the article. In addition I wish to say that I asked the ladies who originally made the accusation that they should put their statements in writing, which they <sup>did</sup> in order that the matter might be handled by the Board of Trustees. The Board meets here one day in the year, and has an enormous amount of business to transact. It would have been utterly out of the question for them to have given time for a prolonged personal hearing on this question, especially in view of our absolute confidence in Professor Schaeffer and his absolute denial of the charges.

You speak of the fact that the honor and veracity of certain ladies has been impugned. Please let me say that this question was not determined on a basis of honor and veracity. The honor and veracity of all persons was assumed, including Professor Schaeffer himself, and members of our faculty who attended the lecture. It was simply a question of memory and correctness of understanding. You probably know that it is a rule of legal practice (so I am informed by competent lawyers) that in cases of prosecution for criminal libel, memory is not held to be trustworthy for the purpose of conviction after one year from the time the memory relates to, whereas in this case three years were allowed to elapse before the matter was brought up at all. I believe that all the facts of the case, with many of which you and your body are not familiar, were before the committee when it acted.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

President